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Tools for Building a Winning Program



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INTRO

Get Out The Vote (GOTV) can mean different things to different people, but the goal is always the same: to get your supporters to the polls!

For those on the ground, it could mean throwing on your favorite pair of tennis shoes and waking up at 3AM on E-Day for an early morning literature (lit) drop. For others, GOTV stands for late nights, data entry, carpal tunnel and lots and lots of junk food. These days, Get Out The Vote can also mean social pressure, tracking canvass crews digitally, advanced micro-targeting and targeted digital ads. Whatever Get Out The Vote means to you, there are best practices to guide you towards a great GOTV program. That's why we've put together this eBook to help candidate, advocacy and independent expenditure campaigns mobilize supporters, get voters to the polls and win elections.

After all the time and money you pour into a campaign (not to mention your sanity), it's important to finish strong with a robust GOTV program. In this book, we'll cover the basics of GOTV, including crafting a GOTV strategy and harnessing the power of canvassing, phone banking, mail, digital and data to boost your GOTV efforts.

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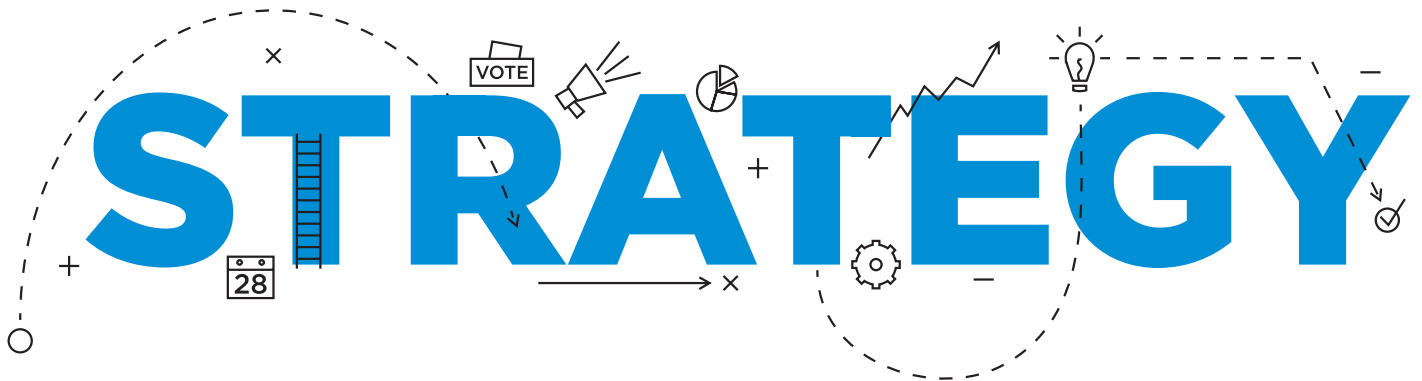
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The Basics

GOTV (gee-oh-tee-vee) stands for **G**et **O**ut **T**he **V**ote, and is used to describe a strategy for ensuring that voters who are most likely to vote for your campaign actually do so. It sounds simple, but there can be hurdles that need to be cleared in order to run an effective program. To complicate matters even more, your opponent is doing the same thing.

Before you start to craft any GOTV program, make sure you know the voting laws in your campaign's district. It would be a shame to lose an election because you didn't know your potential voters could register and cast a ballot on the same day, or that early voting is limited to voters who have petitioned to be on a permanent early voting list. This information can be found with the board of election office responsible for overseeing your elections.

After you've learned what the rules are around voting, begin to craft a game plan to ensure that your identified supporters cast their votes. Do this early on in your campaign planning—don't think of GOTV as the final lap of a marathon. Rather, everything you do in your campaign should lead up to and reinforce your GOTV strategy.



Crafting a GOTV Strategy

GOTV always begins with a written plan. That plan shouldn't be a last-minute effort, but rather something that's worked into your campaign from the start. Having a vote goal (the target number of votes you need to win) will help you figure out how many people you need to talk to and will help inform your GOTV universe. (Here are some tips for [creating a vote goal](#).)

Identifying (IDing) supporters from the start. IDing your supporters is an important part of any field campaign. There are a variety of ways to ID voters. One common method is using a 1-6 scale to measure each individual's support with 1 being a solid supporter, 2 lean supporter, 3 undecided, 4 lean opposed, 5 firmly opposed, and 6 not home. Once you've collected this info, you can determine where you will spend your time, money and people.

When it comes to GOTV planning, make sure you don't turn out people whose support for your campaign is uncertain. DON'T waste your time on GOTV for supporters who are guaranteed to show up either. DO spend time during GOTV turning out people who you've identified as supporters but who may have some inconsistency following through to vote on or before Election Day.

Hone your message. GOTV messaging should include the basic information a voter needs in order to vote, including the candidate's name, the voter's polling location, poll hours, numbers to call for a ride to the polls, and numbers to call if there are problems at the polls.

If you're operating in a state where voting laws have recently changed (specifically, those states that have tightened voter ID laws), that's also critical information to include.

Use social pressure. When you're talking to people around GOTV time, remind them that they are the kind of person who cares about the future of their community, which is why they are a supporter of your campaign. They are a voter, that's why they are getting a GOTV call from you—identify them as such and urge them to show their commitment by voting in this election.

Have people make a voting plan with you. Don't just remind people of when and where to vote, talk them through their personal voting plan. How are they getting to the polls that day? What time will they go? Are they taking anyone else with them to the polls? Get as specific as possible so that they are more likely to remember to get out and vote. These GOTV tactics have been tested and proven to increase turnout.

We'll get into more later, but a few tried-and-true tactics for GOTV are:

- Switching your door-knocking speech from persuasion (“You should vote for me because...”) to mobilization (“Your polling place is St. Michael’s school, do you have a plan to stop there and cast a vote for my campaign next Tuesday?”).
- Calling identified supporters to work through voting plans with them a night or two before Election Day. Asking them about their plan will help them visualize themselves casting a ballot, which has been proven to get more folks to vote.

- If you have enough, having volunteers at the ready to help folks with mobility issues get to the polls. Ask folks on the phones if they'll need help getting to their voting location.
- If you have absentee voting, getting a list of folks who have requested absentee ballots and sending target voters information about your candidate.



Busting GOTV Myths

Some superstition, mythology, and bad ideas surround Get Out The Vote. Before we go any further into GOTV, let's take a minute to dispel any rumors you might have heard.

A solid GOTV plan should be a part of your campaign from day one. Get Out The Vote is something you should be planning for a year out, not a couple of months out. You can put your GOTV plan into action the days and weeks leading up the first ballot being cast.

GOTV is separate from persuasion. Think of GOTV and persuasion as the wonder twins of your campaign planning. Separately they are okay, but working together they make a really powerful tool. It is not enough to just tell people to vote; you need to give them a reason to vote for your candidate.

GOTV is only for the field folks. In reality, GOTV is everyone's job—from the field director to the fundraiser (donors are voters too!). If you want to win, GOTV plans should be integrated into everything you do. Whether you're advertising on TV or organizing community meetings, you need to be identifying, persuading and turning out your voters.

GOTV is a budget breaker. Anything in a campaign can be a budget breaker, from campaign signs to paid TV. Left unchecked, spending can be the downfall of any campaign. If everything is part of a comprehensive campaign plan and budget from the beginning, with real deliverables and outcomes, you will be on the right track.

GOTV can't be measured. Testing and measurement separate the good campaigns from the bad. You need to have results for everything you do in a campaign. A well-run GOTV plan has real measurable components: number of doors knocked, number of phone calls made, number of cable TV spots up during early voting, etc. All of these things can and should be part of a GOTV plan. Pulling control groups for mail and canvass operations is another way to judge success, but just making sure your team is accountable for goals will help you measure success.

GOTV is a waste of money. When you lose a race by less than 1 percent of the vote (or ONE VOTE!), you'll have wished you had put more money into identifying and turning out your voters. Again, as long as GOTV is a part of the overall campaign plan and you have real goals for it, you can make sure it is not a waste.

GOTV can just be done at the supermarket. Clean-up on aisle five! GOTV has grown beyond someone sitting in a grocery store parking lot in a lawn chair. Your GOTV plan should be a sophisticated program using people, message and tactics to ID and turn out your voters. This is a layered program, but one of the best GOTV tactics is meeting voters at their doors and collecting information to act on.

GOTV is untargeted. These days, due to budget, strategy and time constraints, GOTV programs are focused on a specific universe. Whether that is door-to-door, phones, mail or online, you are not likely to turn everyone out. You must have a specific group of targets you are focused on.

GOTV is the same in every election. If you ran the same play against every opponent you played against, would you win? I doubt it. You better know who you need to talk with and what your vote goal is. Build a strategy based on what is going on in your campaign. GOTV changes every election.

GOTV is unsophisticated. This one just makes us laugh. There is a ton of sophistication in today's GOTV operations, from real-time GPS

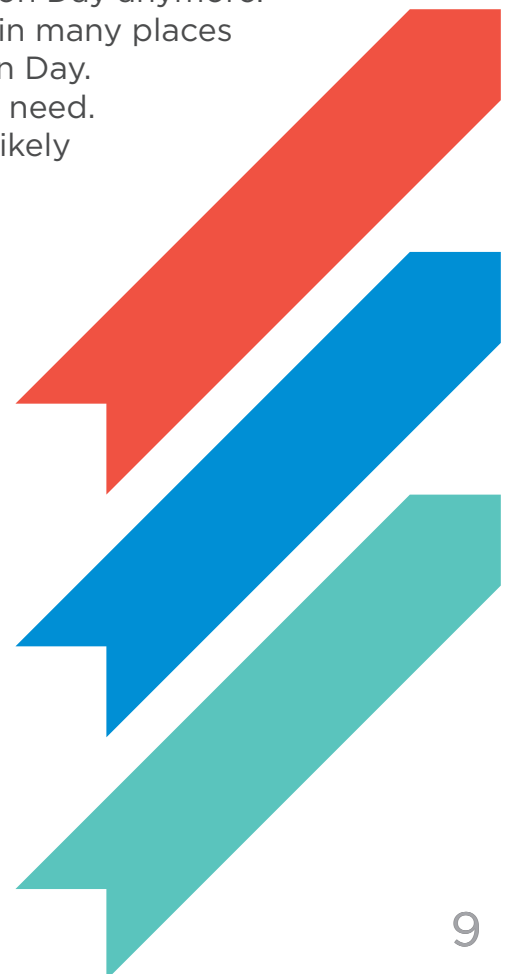
tracking of canvassers to CPA-based vote pledges. The tactics and techniques are limitless.

GOTV is only for presidential campaigns. If you want to win, you need an operation to identify and turn out your voters, no matter your campaign. Your budget will not be as big as a presidential campaign budget, but that does not mean you should not have one.

GOTV is only about turning out infrequent voters. GOTV is about many kinds of voters. Drop-off voters in many elections will be greater than the win margin in your campaign. If you can get these folks to vote in your race for your candidate, you can significantly increase your chances of winning.

GOTV is only for urban areas. GOTV is for all types of areas (urban, rural, suburban, and any in-betweens) and all types of campaigns. To be clear, there is not a one-size-fits-all solution for GOTV. It must be customized for each campaign. But, don't think you can just phone it in. You need an integrated Get Out The Vote program that works for your community.

GOTV is one day. A GOTV plan is not just for Election Day anymore. Due to early vote and no-excuses absentee voting, in many places over 50 percent of votes will be cast before Election Day. Use that time to turn out and inform the voters you need. If you are just running a one-day program, you are likely missing the boat.



PLAN

Elements of a GOTV Plan

It takes time to execute a GOTV plan effectively, and it's important to use a number of different elements in your plan. A robust Get Out The Vote strategy is a winning one. Here are just a few elements of a modern GOTV plan...

Canvassing

Your GOTV canvassing list should generally consist of ID'ed supporters (or, in campaign speak, your 1s and 2s). The most important times to canvass are right after work until the polls close, and over the weekend at appropriate times. You know your community best, so you'll know if your supporters are likely to be at church or elsewhere in the community.

As always, your canvassers should be provided with good walk packets that include maps, a script, enough literature to pass out, clipboards, pens/pencils and any other basic instructions that are relevant to the task at hand.

Lit Drops

Lit drops aren't as effective as door-knocking, so you want to use them judiciously in your GOTV program. That said, even though time is limited, they are a great way to communicate with voters who are likely to vote your way but could use a reminder. Generally speaking, lit drops are your best GOTV option for high party performing wards. As always, make sure that everyone knows that lit **cannot be left in mailboxes**. We like to remind folks to never, ever even touch a mailbox.

Mail

If you've got it in your budget, layer in GOTV mail. As with other methods of communication, timing here is everything. Your GOTV mail should take into account any and all voting dates and it should include information about how to vote. Another thing to consider in your GOTV mail is positive social pressure. This does not have to be a full-on Big Brother moment where you tell a voter you know their complete history. It can be softer. For instance, we've had good success reminding people that early voting is convenient and they can sit back and relax knowing they've done their part.

Phones

Phones are integral to GOTV planning. However you're choosing to tackle GOTV, phones (robocalls, paid live calls or, more likely, volunteer calls) should be a part of your program. If you're using volunteers, figure out how many calls need to be made, how many phones you need and how many shifts need to be filled. Make sure you provide scripts and instructions, and schedule calls from the beginning of your GOTV program up until 10 minutes before the polls close.

Visibility

To be clear, visibility is icing. Make sure you cover your bases with effective and efficient modes of voter contact like GOTV phones, canvassing and mail, before you worry about visibility. That said, it can be a great way to energize volunteers (especially if you're lucky enough to have extras). Choose high-traffic corners for signs and target them during rush hour.

Poll watchers

Poll-watching is volunteer-intensive but allows campaigns to focus on supporters who haven't yet voted. Make sure you know the rules in advance, and make sure any poll-watching volunteers are also apprised of the rules.

Digital

Over the past couple of cycles, GOTV has really moved into the digital era. Whether you use mobile devices to track canvass crews, Facebook to mobilize volunteers, SMS to move core supporters to action, or IP targeting, geo-fencing and cookie targeting to reach voters, there are tons of options for digital GOTV tactics. We'll discuss some more digital techniques later.

Canvassing and Phone Banks

Canvassing is special to me. I love knocking on doors. I think it is still a vastly underrated form of communication, and it can be especially helpful when it comes to GOTV. Why do I think canvassing is so special? Because of the connection direct contact makes with targeted voters in a personal and systematic way.

With door-to-door contact, especially on political campaigns and issue organizing, one good conversation can be enough to make a difference. Let's discuss how a good door-to-door contact can earn votes.

Door-to-door contact breaks down barriers.

No matter where you are or who you are, door-to-door canvassing has a power that no other medium has. It can get people to actually talk to each other and break down self-imposed barriers of party, race, gender identity and ignorance. The conversation you can have at a door is a great equalizer—you are a walking change agent.

Unlikely connections form.

Canvassing done in the right way can create a connection between two people who may have never met and may never meet again, but that brief exchange of ideas can persuade someone in a way that a TV spot or a mail piece cannot. Whether it is volunteer, candidate or even a paid canvasser, it can make a great impact.

Actually knock.

Tools can help you canvass, but you still need to actually knock on the doors. We love the door-to-door canvassing tools that are out there. Catalist, Grassroots Unwired, NGP VAN, SmartVAN, Organizer and VoteBuilder all have tools that can help organize and support canvass programs, but they cannot make you knock on the doors and have those real conversations.





Canvassing Safety

Any way you cut it, canvassing for GOTV can be dangerous, as it requires that you approach strangers in what is often unfamiliar terrain. Below is a short list of suggestions to protect you and your canvassers while knocking on doors.

1. The most effective way to ensure your safety when canvassing is to simply stay aware. Keep a cell phone on you and ask canvassers to leave valuables in the car. If you are vigilant you can often spot loose dogs or a car that is driving too fast miles down the road. Recognize the potential for danger and proceed with caution.
2. Do not argue. On occasion, you will accidentally knock on a person's door who is unreceptive to your message. When you encounter someone who is combative, simply end the conversation and go canvass another part of your turf.
3. Rattle gates before entering a yard and be on the lookout for dogs. Assume every mid- to large-sized dog is a potential danger unless specifically told otherwise by the dog's owner.
4. Never go inside a house, even when invited. Always stay on the doorstep.
5. And last but certainly not least, it's always a best practice to go canvassing in pairs and have each individual canvass opposite sides of the street. There will be times when this is not an option, but it should be the goal, particularly for any new canvassers.

How to Write the Perfect GOTV Phone Script

1. **What is the goal of the call?** This is key to an effective script – you need to identify your goal before writing your phone script.
2. **Who will make the calls?** You need to know who will be making the calls before you write your script.
3. **Should you use “robo” calls?** They can still be effective when you have no other options. Think about who will be the voice in the call while writing the script.
4. **Who is your target?** You need to connect with your voters, so write your script with your target in mind.
5. **Is your message clear?** Clarity is absolutely essential. Make sure your script is as short and to the point as possible.

6. Do you want to gather info? Calls can be a great way to find out who supports you, who will turn out to vote and who will give money. If you want answers, you need to write questions into the scripts.

Make sure your call will make a difference by accomplishing a goal. If you don't think it can, don't waste money and resources.

GRASSROOTS

How to be Awesome at Grassroots Organizing

While working on a political campaign in any capacity is an awesome and rewarding experience, the nature of the laborious work involved takes a toll on many campaign organizers and they eventually disengage and burn out. If you want to stay fired up and be a standout at grassroots organizing, pay heed to the following tips:

Competition is good. Innocuous and jovial competition between fellow volunteers will make the campaign more fun and more productive. For example, striving for the most dials and contacts during call time or knocking on the most doors during block walks will inevitably make you look awesome while motivating other volunteers at the same time. It's a win-win situation for everyone.

Come early, stay late. This is an oft-repeated stock phrase, but considering the 24-hour nature of campaigns and the news cycle, there is always work to be done. Getting to work early and staying late gives you extra insight into the nuts and bolts of the campaign. Regularly, grassroots organizers work exclusively in the field, but if you make yourself available, you probably will have the opportunity to expand your role to communications, digital strategy, research, surrogate management, and other branches of a campaign.

Be friendly. There's never a lonely moment on the campaign trail. Staff and volunteers are omnipresent. Don't be intimidated by the staff; talk to them, seek their advice, offer to get them coffee, maybe even ask them to get lunch with you. Primarily, this is beneficial from a networking standpoint, but it also helps to build a rapport with important staffers. If there is ever a vacancy in paid staff, the friendly organizer who offered to get everyone coffee may be the first person they think of to fill the job.

Digital and Direct Mail for GOTV

Over the past couple of cycles, GOTV has really moved into the digital era. The possibilities for GOTV and your digital program are endless. From using mobile devices to track canvass crews, Facebook to mobilize volunteers, SMS to move core supporters to action, or IP targeting, geo-fencing and cookie targeting to reach voters, the world is your oyster. Below are a few ways you can utilize GOTV in a digital medium.

Mobile has continued to become a must for politics with an ever-expanding set of options for digital GOTV. Using mobile devices to track canvass crews and input data in real time has almost become the norm. There are multiple products out there to input data and track canvassers, and the ability to manage and track folks makes GOTV easier and more accountable than ever before.

SMS has been used by organizations for turnout and mobilization for years, and the simplicity and ease of use of SMS for GOTV makes it a staple technology for digital GOTV. SMS can be used to easily move core supporters to action as long as you are collecting opt-in cell numbers from the beginning of your campaign.

Facebook is a great tool to mobilize volunteers and engage the base. It also continues to be a hallmark for recruiting last minute campaign staff, volunteers and canvass crews. **Twitter** is also a great place to engage and mobilize supporters, but only if you have a large Twitter following. You can even run Facebook and Twitter ads to highlight your campaign and encourage people to GOTV.

In addition to social media ads, **using traditional digital ads** for turnout is also a good option for campaigns and groups. IP and cookie targeting are great ways to reach and mobilize voters.

Click-to-call technology and pledge-to-vote phone programs using recorded pledges from voters, along with an increased ability for volunteers to use predictive dialing technology, have made phone programs more tech savvy.

Geo-fenced ads can also add a level of sophistication to your GOTV efforts that may help you to turn out voters. Geo-fencing involves choosing a geographic location (e.g., an early voting location) and serving ads to people who are in the vicinity via their mobile devices.

One caveat when exploring this targeting: as with other forms of online advertising targeting, nothing is perfect. With different cell phone providers, you can't ensure that every single person within this area will see your ads. That said, chances are you are reaching the majority of your intended audience in a unique and attention-grabbing way.

5 ways to help your GOTV mail



Around Election Day, mailboxes will be stuffed with political mail. Make yours stand out, and get your voters mobilized.

Have some fun. While you probably want to have some mail in your program that is all business, it doesn't hurt to have some fun. It's not particularly interesting to watch an interview or a speech where someone is hammering you with facts and statistics, or pedantically talking at you about their cause or candidacy. The same (perhaps unsurprisingly) goes for mail. If you can communicate your message in a humorous or fun way, you may draw people in enough to actually make an impression.

Say it, don't spray it. Your words are valuable to you, but they're likely not all that important to the average person reading your Democratic direct mail. Readers probably place much more value on their time, which is why, generally, you've got just a few seconds to catch someone's attention at the mailbox, and just a few additional seconds of their time if they decide to peruse the piece a bit further. Given that fact, you've got to get to the point,

and you've got to get there quickly. Direct mail should not look like you've fire-hosed it with information. Whatever you write, cut it down, and then cut it down again.

Look good while you're doing it. Maybe it's because direct mail isn't the sexiest of campaign communications mediums, so people don't bother to fuss over it, but there's a LOT of really ugly mail every election cycle. I'm a weirdo who works in Democratic direct mail, so I collect that kind of thing to pass around as examples of what NOT to do, but most people won't give those mailers a second thought. I should note that I'm not talking about letter packages, which have been shown to be more effective the more governmental (read: ugly and utilitarian) they look. I'm talking about postcards—mailers where graphics and images play a central role in the look and feel of the piece. Take the time to make sure that your mail looks professional and inviting (even if you're saying something mean—but true—about your opponent).

Get real, get read. A lot of the barbs that get tossed around throughout an election are incredibly abstract for your average voter. Saying that Councilmember John Doe has a record of waste and mismanagement certainly doesn't sound great for John Doe, but how does it actually impact a voter's daily life? Making that connection is critical for any campaign. If you can find a real live person who is willing to go on the record for a testimonial mailer, go for it (and get a professional photographer to handle the photos).

Be creative. Think about how many GOTV mailers voters receive each cycle, and how many of them feature images of a raised hand or a ballot box. At some point, if you don't rethink the same-old-same-old, those images become staid and less effective. While I wouldn't just toss the baby out with the bathwater here, I would urge you to think about how you can approach your message from a different angle—you may just catch an eye and save a mailer from going unread.

Your Guide to Creating a Great Walkcard

Walkcards are an important element to any field campaign, even when GOTV rolls around. Unfortunately, a lot of campaigns create walkcards the wrong way. Here's some advice on producing great political walkcards.

Cut the Copy

Just like a piece of direct mail, we recommend that you keep your political walkcards, which are even smaller than direct mail, short and concise. A 9 x 8 one-fold political walkcard does not have nearly the available text space as, say, an 8.5 x 11 piece of direct mail. So when you're writing your political walkcard, cut the copy, and then cut it again.

Sizing

Obviously you can't have a walkcard be too big, as it would be unwieldy for a canvasser to carry around and use effectively at the door. To save money, many campaigns will produce a small, two-sided walkcard. However, the best walkcards have folds. They will cost a bit more but will provide you with double the amount of surface area and therefore, more opportunities to give the prospective voter a proper introduction to your candidate.

Stick to the Big Issues

Your walkcard is not a policy paper. Including too many issues in your walkcard will prevent any of these issues from really reaching the voter. Feature only your core three or four contrastive issues and save the rest for your political direct mail or the "issues" section of your website.

Brand your Walkcards

Be sure that you are featuring your candidate's name prominently on every side of the walkcard. Include a logo. Your candidate logo isn't something you should go nuts with, but having a strong logo is a nice way to brand your political communications and further allow your candidate's name to sink in. And with candidate logos, simple is always better.

Use Bullet Points

We know you want to include a full bio of the candidate on the walkcard. However, with very limited space on your walkcard, that can't (or rather, shouldn't) happen. The full candidate bio should be reserved only for your website. In its place, one method we've used with success is a simple "Meet _____" section on the back of the walkcard that includes 4 or 5 short bio bullet points about the candidate.

Powerful Headlines

Since walkcards are particularly limited on space, it makes your headlines and subheads all that much more important. Be sure that your headlines are pointed and concisely summarize your body copy in a few eye-catching words.

Images!

Pictures can speak louder than words. This is particularly true on a tiny walkcard. Where many walkcards go wrong is featuring only a boring candidate headshot. People like to look at pictures and having a few great shots of your candidate engaging with regular people will make all the difference.

Vote Date

When you're using lit for GOTV purposes, it's even more important to make sure that people know when they need to actually vote. Make sure you have the correct information so that people can actually Get Out The Vote for your campaign.



Digging into the Data

Data has come a long way as far as accessibility. For some, Democratic direct mail targeting used to be a mysterious realm where consultants pulled targets out from behind a magic curtain. With the advent of modern voter file software by folks like [Catalist](#), [NGP VAN](#), [TargetSmart](#), [NationBuilder](#) and [Labels and Lists](#), you can have direct access to the voter data and models you need to make targeting decisions for your campaign. But if this is the first time you are running a campaign or working with voter data, below are some tips for Democratic direct mail targeting. These tips will also be helpful in developing your field and phone program.

While these are not GOTV-specific best practices, they are principles that should be applied throughout the course of your campaign and will ultimately help you to run a more efficient and effective Get Out The Vote program.

Get access to a good file. You should be able to get access to a good voter file through your Democratic state party, but in some municipal campaigns and primaries that might not be possible. The firms we mentioned above all have good voter files and most offer at least some basic models to help you identify your best targets.

Know who will vote. As you define your vote goal you need to also explore who will actually vote in your election. Dig into your voter file and look at who makes up a likely voter universe. If you are using a voter file with data modeling, be sure to use the most current vote propensity model to help gauge this. Even the best vote propensity model isn't a guarantee of who will show up, but it is a great place to start.

Use your research. Polling, your message box, and opposition research should all be used in deciding which voters you need to communicate with and how best to do it.

Using modeled data. A good vote propensity score and partisanship score are your keys to identifying the best universe for field and direct mail targeting. Some states don't have party registration on their file—making a good partisanship score irreplaceable—and even in states that have party on their

file, a good model will help you better refine your universe. Also critical, as we mentioned above, is a good vote propensity score for your election—what are the chances any given voter will vote in your election?

Make sure to use the model that best reflects your election. Is it an off-year municipal election? Are you running down-ballot in a presidential year? Many firms offer various vote propensity models. Make sure you are using the one that will best identify voters in your specific race (meaning, the modeled data is built for an analogous election). There are lots and lots of other models out there. Use them where you need to, but use them wisely. Most models will answer a single question (e.g., Who is most likely to vote in the 2013 November General Election?). If your direct mail targeting includes a model, knowing what question your model answers is key to success. Trying to force a model to work beyond that question is where you'll run into big problems—it's like forcing a square peg into a round hole.

Utilize your team. Staff, volunteers, interest groups and consultants—yes even consultants—play valuable roles on your team, so use them. They have resources that can help you fine-tune your field and direct mail targeting. Many mail firms will help you identify your field universes when they build your mail universe, give you targets to pull, and even write canvass scripts without additional costs. Make sure to ask.

3 Steps to a Sparkling Clean DATABASE

Dirty political data is messy, wastes time and money, and prevents you from getting your message to the people you are trying to reach. There are some simple steps to help you scrub your political data to keep it clean and neat, and to make sure you're getting the most from this extremely valuable tool. Following these principles throughout the course of your campaign will leave you in the strongest standing possible as you begin your GOTV push.

Political data is collected in a myriad of ways. While it often involves micro-targeting from a voter file, it can come from member databases, or might be hand-keyed from reply cards, sign-up sheets, petitions, and events, etc. All these different sources being compiled into one master data file requires some periodic housekeeping on your part to ensure that the political data shines in the best possible light. There are three main steps that will help you develop a policy to maintain your political data and periodically wash it clean to ensure that it is current.

1. Know where your political data comes from and how it is entered into the database. Develop some best practices for this task and make sure everyone working on the database is trained on data entry as well as regular maintenance.
2. Your data may be used for many different applications from direct mail to email to canvassing and more. Make sure your political data includes key fields needed for all these applications. Make sure key fields are properly populated and that formatting remains consistent throughout.
3. Conduct a periodic, manual review to see how it really looks. Conduct regularly scheduled audits to clean, standardize, merge and purge, and review your database. This periodic review should include:
 - a. Running your political data through the National Change of Address (NCOA) database to make sure your addresses are all correct and current
 - b. Removing duplicate addresses and/or names
 - c. Householding your political data to prevent multiple mailings to the same address

Political data is one of your most important tools. Keep your political data in the best shape possible with regular maintenance so it remains the valuable asset it is, taking you all the way through GOTV and across the finish line!

Advanced Targeting is Key to Winning

Advanced targeting can be the advantage you need to win your campaign. Before we get deep into micro-targeting, voter modeling and other advanced targeting, let's start off by defining targeting so that we are all on the same page. This is a basic rule for all campaigns: candidates, ballot, independent expenditure, etc. Targeting (sometimes referred to as micro-targeting) is looking at your whole district or universe and then narrowing it down to the people you need to communicate with to win. Every campaign has limited resources, including people, time, money or all of the above. Effectively targeting helps you use your limited resources as effectively as possible.

Now for advanced targeting: with the growing use of modeling and robust data manipulation software, even small budget campaigns have the access and ability to do some pretty advanced targeting and testing. As you can imagine though, all of these techniques and tools create an almost unlimited number of ways to cut and divide your data into your targeted voter universes.

Geographic targeting is exactly what it sounds like—targeting people based on where they live. If you're a candidate, it means making sure to talk with voters who live in your district. For advocacy it means talking to people in your targeted districts or cities. Before pulling your voter universe, make sure the districting data on your voter file is correct.

Demographic targeting is a little more complex and may take a little more thinking about what voters you need to win. It may also take polling or other research. If you are running in a tightly contested primary in a predominantly Democratic district, targeting all Democratic voters may not be your best bet. If you are looking to run in a swing district that leans a little Republican, you may need to include some progressive Republican voters to win. Either way, you'll want to use your poll numbers or historical data to find the most likely voters you can either persuade, or who will vote for you, but may need encouragement to get out and vote. Demographic targeting can utilize models (likely provided by a state party for down-ballot races), voter file data, and potentially even commercial or other types of data.

Once you have figured out who lives in your district and the demographics that you are focusing on, then you need to know who will actually vote. Voter history is critical in targeting, because unless you have unlimited resources (if you do, call us), you only want to talk to people who always (super voters) or sometimes vote, and not to people who are unlikely to or never vote. You do not have enough time to talk to every voter, or try to run a voter registration or engagement campaign in conjunction with your actual campaign, so let's just save those for after you're elected.

When looking at methods of targeted communication you will need to take into consideration different factors to complete advanced targeting. When targeting for canvassing, you will be doing it based on turf and how voters are grouped together in walkable areas. Some people may need to be reached by phone or direct mail, because you cannot reach them in person, and that is ultimately a different universe that you'll carve out in your voter file.

And of course, your actual GOTV targeting should be based on information you've collected about your targeted universe over the course of your campaign. Who supports you, but may need an extra nudge to make it to the polls? Who should you remove from your universe because your IDs show they won't support you? Making sure that your GOTV universe reflects what you've learned over the course of your campaign will produce a well-defined universe that will streamline your GOTV efforts and help you get your supporters to the polls when it counts.

Everything Else GOTV

Social Pressure: Not Just For Big GOTV Campaigns Anymore

Friend and mentor to The Campaign Workshop, Hal Malchow, wrote [a blog post](#) we love for *Campaigns and Elections* about applying social pressure GOTV tactics in smaller campaigns. Malchow reviews the history and science behind using social pressure as a tactic in GOTV, as well as current best practices. Here's a quick summary:

- We have conducted randomized, controlled experiments and know that door-knocking and live calls increase turnout, but that they can't always reach all of your targets. Only mail can reach all of your needed voters at the same time, so allocating a portion of your GOTV budget to direct mail is a good investment.
- Not all GOTV mail is created equal. GOTV mail that uses positive social pressure can boost your turnout by nearly 2.5%. Additionally, the more formal and official-looking the mail, the better; this is not a time for pretty photos and graphics. Luckily, typed letters in plain envelopes look pretty official, and are very cheap to print and mail.
- The most important part of this letter is the content, or applying the social pressure. It turns out, if you thank people for previously voting, and tell them you hope to see their names among those who vote again, they are much more likely to vote. It's a good idea to remind people that no one will know how they voted, or how they have voted in the past, but just that they voted.
- If you're a smaller campaign with only a few thousand needed votes to win, you could even do this in-house. Get volunteers to stuff envelopes, or fold and tab your mailing. Mail merge your voter list onto labels, and have another couple volunteers to address and stamp envelopes. Depending on how much help you get, this could all be completed in one evening.

Moral of the story: sometimes peer pressure can work in positive ways, like by increasing voter participation in an election. And that's a good thing.

GOTV Tactics for Advocacy

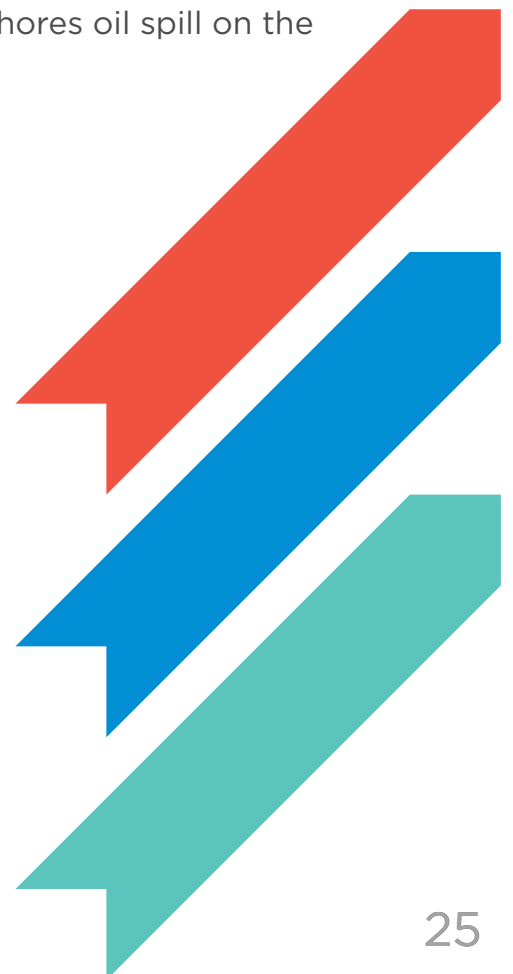
As you may know, a growing problem in the nonprofit, advocacy and corporate space is engagement. We communicate with folks all the time and bombard them with messages, but that does not necessarily mean people act on them. The hallmark of a good GOTV plan is engagement; and that means getting folks to commit to voting, and then enforcing their commitments. Bolstering that engagement can be achieved through door-to-door or phone canvassing programs, digital GOTV through banner ads, email, CPA campaigns or SMS, and through a variety of field activities.

We have seen companies and advocacy groups layer these strategies like we do for GOTV in a political campaign. They are doing it to create a greater connection and engagement. Examples of GOTV in the nonprofit or advocacy sector are...

Canvass for a Cause, a California nonprofit organization that, as the name would imply, uses canvassing in order to engage and inform citizens on progressive issues like LGBT rights.

Oregon nonprofits, including the **Fund for the Public Interest** and **OSPRIG**, use canvassing as a way to fundraise.

British Petroleum canvassed investors after the Gulf Shores oil spill on the possibility of the organization breaking up.



Other GOTV Resources

Looking for more information on GOTV? We're here to help.

Rock the Vote

Rock the Vote is a nonpartisan organization dedicated to driving youth to the polls. Rock the Vote's page on election information includes a state-by-state voter guide. This guide can help register voters or check a voter's registration status. You can also find polling locations, and information on absentee voting, as well as cool videos.



Analyst Institute

The Analyst Institute uses evidence-backed best practices in order to improve voter contact for progressives. Their work has received great praise from *The New York Times*. Be warned, they don't let just anyone in on their tips; you'll need to apply in order to join Analyst Institute's network.



Nonprofit Vote Part 1 & Part 2

Nonprofit Vote aims to increase the voter turnout of members of various nonprofit organizations. Nonprofit Vote's GOTV page has anything your nonprofit may need to get prepared for a campaign. This includes sections on getting started, staying nonpartisan, voting state-by-state, voter registration, ballot measures, candidate engagement, research, and voter turnout. They also have a page dedicated to GOTV resources that includes everything but the kitchen sink.



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